

THE NATURAL GARDENER NEWSLETTER

March has arrived and that means Spring is just around the corner. Finally. Although that last blast of winter in the last week of February makes me wonder if spring is going to be a tad late this year. I hope you remembered to protect those plants in your garden that are more sensitive to cold. Have you been out in your garden yet this year? I finally managed to spend some time in mine last Sunday. I did a lot of cleanup and put down a mulch of Sea Soil in my beds and all my pots & planters. It felt so good to be back out in the garden reacquainting myself with all the plants. I was surprised at how many of them were already emerging from the soil. My Arisaema sikokianum is poking out of the soil as is Podophyllum 'Spotty Dotty', some of my hostas are up a couple of inches, both my Hepatica nobilis & japonica are just about to bloom, several of my clematis are budding out, my Japanese Maples are heavily budded and of course my snow drops are blooming. Let me know what's blooming in your garden right now.

In this issue I will be talking about More Plants for 2011, Plant of the Month, a refresher on Clematis pruning, Mason Bees, Garden Tours 2011, Garden Classes and of course the To Do List.

Enjoy!

Bob



Galanthus elwesii – Giant Snowdrop

I have been writing a garden blog and wanted to remind you to check it out at blog.thenatural-gardener.com



We are also on [Facebook](#). You can find us at The Natural Gardener Garden Store.

PLANTS FOR 2011 PART 2

Here we are with more plants The Natural Gardener will be bringing in for Spring 2011.

Magnolia 'Butterflies'



This beautiful hybrid magnolia is a golden jewel in your garden. It blooms around the end of April with luscious yellow flowers that don't tend to fade in the sun. This small tree is a great addition to any garden.

Diospyros kaki – Persimmon



Yes, this is the tree that produces the Persimmon fruit and yes, we can grow it here. Just make sure it gets lots of sun and has a little bit of protection from wind.

Pittosporum tenuifolium 'Gold Star'



Gold Star is an evergreen shrub that will reach a height of about 8 feet eventually. The leaves with the white stripe down the centre are quite striking and make for an interesting accent in the garden.

Acer palmatum 'Red Spider'



Acer 'Red Spider' is an upright, slow growing, red leaved Japanese Maple. The leaf lobes are quite narrow giving it a more airy look in the garden. It reaches a height of about 6' to 8'.

Ginkgo biloba 'California Sunset'



I have always had a soft spot for all Ginkgo's but 'California Sunset' is my favourite. As you can see the leaves are beautifully variegated and this cultivar does not tend to revert back to plain green. Unlike the regular Ginkgo's this one only reaches a height of about 10' to 12' making it perfect for small yards and growing in containers.

Epimedium x youngianum 'Starlet'



Epimediums are such great plants for the shade garden even growing in dry shade. They are slowly growing more popular and you can see why with 'Starlet'. Beautiful sprays of pink and white striped flowers and evergreen foliage. What more could you want.

Helleborus 'Golden Lotus'



'Golden Lotus' is an exquisite double yellow flowered hellebore. Some plants have solid yellow while some will have a pinkish picotee edging to the petals. This lovely strain was bred by Oregon hellebore breeder Marietta O'Byrne.

Dicentra spectabilis 'Valentine'



This new bleeding heart is going to be a popular one. Deep red flowers on red stems with blue-grey foliage. All I can say is Wow. Grow it in a shade to part shade location.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Ribes Sanguineum – Red Flowering Currant

Ribes sanguineum is one of our most popular native shrubs and is found growing on Vancouver Island and Southern BC. One of the aspects of this shrub that makes it so attractive is that it comes into bloom in early spring when we are craving blooms and colour in our garden. *Ribes sanguineum* gives that to us in a big way. It produces racemes of pinky-red flowers in early spring, here on the coast that means in March, and Rufous hummingbirds love them. It is not a small shrub. It can reach a height of 12 feet in ideal conditions so keep that in mind when deciding where to plant it. I have one in my small garden that I have had for 12 years now. Every year, after blooming, I prune it back quite hard so I can keep it to a size that is manageable for my garden. The pruning doesn't seem to bother it because I still get masses of flowers every year. After flowering small fruit develops and while I don't think they taste all that great the birds love them. It is versatile as far as lighting, growing well in full sun to part shade although mine is growing in full shade and doing fine. There are several cultivars available, two of the most popular are King Edward VII which has darker red flowers and Icicle which has white flowers. Interestingly enough it took 19th century botanist David Douglas to introduce our native shrub into cultivation. If for no other reason grow this lovely native for the hummingbirds, they will thank you for it.

Zone: 6

Light: Full sun to part shade

Soil: Moist, well-drained. Will become drought tolerant once established.

Height: 12 feet

Spread: 8 feet



A SPECIAL OFFER JUST FOR READERS OF THE NEWSLETTER

I find myself with a few vines left over from the fall and they need to find homes before the new arrivals appear. So to assist them in finding new homes The Natural Gardener is offering them at **50% OFF**. Here is the selection and the amount in stock:

Clematis Patricia Ann Fretwell x 2
Clematis Jackmanii x 2
Clematis Etoile Violette x 2
Clematis Bluebird x 3
Clematis HF Young x 1
Clematis Nelly Moser x 1
Clematis Multi Blue x 4
Clematis Blue Light x 1
Golden Hops x 3
Jasmine Stephanense x 2
Akebia (Chocolate Vine) x 4
Hydrangea petiolaris Miranda (Climbing Hydrangea) x 1
Schizophragma roseum (Pink Japanese Climbing Hydrangea) x 1

They are all budded and just waiting for the temperature to warm up and they will be off and growing. I hope you can help them find a home.

MARCH GARDENING TO DO LIST

- Prune winter flowering shrubs and vines after blooming
- Plant summer and fall blooming bulbs
- Spray for peach leaf curl, peach leaf blight and canker
- **Dormant spray fruit trees and roses if you haven't already done so**
- Plant ground covers
- Plant or repair lawns
- Plant grasses
- Plant roses
- Plant fruit trees
- Plant perennials
- Plant shrubs, trees and vines
- Plant warm season vegetables
- Continue any clean up that may have been interrupted by cold weather
- Start feeding your houseplants with an organic fertilizer
- Start feeding your trees, shrubs, perennials and vines with an organic fertilizer
- Look for interesting and unusual plants for your garden at The Natural Gardener

It's time to start back in the garden. Getting some of these chores out of the way now will make for a much more enjoyable spring later. You'll have time to find those special plants you've been looking for and maybe join us for one of our garden tours.

"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle ... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream."

- Barbara Winkler

Pruning your Clematis

"To prune or not to prune," is the most often asked question. It should be noted that incorrect pruning will never bring an early death to the clematis. At worst an inappropriate pruning will only delay flowering. Furthermore, if all varieties were left unpruned they would all flower very well. However, as is explained below, the flowers would not necessarily cover the plant as well as they otherwise could.

Our first tip on pruning applies to all clematis varieties. The first February or March after planting all clematis should be cut back. At this time, you should be able to see leaf buds developing as your plant breaks dormancy. You should leave two sets of buds on each stem between where you make your cut and soil level. In subsequent years the following recommendations should be used. In an effort to simplify things, we have used three main pruning categories.

Group (A) are varieties that flower only on growth produced the previous year. Pruning should consist of cutting out weak or dead stems as soon as they are finished blooming in May or June. Pruning later than June or very severe pruning will result in fewer blooms the following spring. The very popular montana varieties fall into this group and even though they will survive in our colder climates, if the tops are nipped off by extreme frosts, blooms that should have occurred in early spring might occur in the fall, if at all.

Group (B) Group B is broken down into two sub groups:

Group B (1) are the varieties that flower on wood that has been hardened by the previous season's growth. Normal blooming patterns for this group consist of a heavy flush of flowers in May - June on the previous season's growth followed by a second smaller flush of blooms in September on the current season's growth.

Group B (2) are the varieties that bloom simultaneously on last year's growth and the current season's growth. Group B (2) varieties normally bloom from June to September continuously. For pruning purposes these varieties can be treated either as group B (1) or group C and for that reason work extremely well in combination plantings with group B (1) or group C varieties. If planted alone a group C pruning regime every second year is recommended.

For both group B (1) and B (2), in late February or March a light pruning with some variation in the length of the stems will help produce a well balanced group B plant. Any weak or dead wood should be removed at this time and a careful spacing of the remaining stems is all that is required. The spacing of the stems will allow room for next spring's mass of blooms to open pleasingly. A severe pruning will reduce the number of blooms at the plant's next flowering, but will not hurt the plant; in many cases it will help produce a better balanced plant. If your group B clematis has been neglected for many years, it can be rejuvenated by severely cutting back most of the old growth. It is always amazing how quickly new growth appears. Separate and direct the new shoots or they will soon grow skyward in a tangled mess.

Group (C) These varieties bloom only on the current year's growth. Blooms commence in early summer and continue through to fall. Plants should be cut back in late February or March to two strong sets of buds on each stem as close to ground level as possible. This will provide a plant with blooms that start near ground level and continue to the top of the plant. The majority of the group C clematis start their new growth very close to where last season's growth ended; so if left un-pruned they will very quickly grow out of control. If you want to grow a group C clematis through a tree or have it bloom in an area above its normal blooming height, this characteristic can be used to your advantage. You can prune an established plant at almost any height or not prune at all to accomplish your objective. Keep in mind that group C clematis bloom on the current season's growth, so that if treated in an untraditional way the blooms will be at the top of the plant and a bare stem will gradually appear over a few years. This provides an opportunity to plant a lower growing group B variety to hide the bare stem and to extend the blooming season.

BOTANICAL LATIN

In our continuing quest to understand what the heck the latin names of our favourite plants mean here is the next word of the month:

MACRANTHUS – Meaning with large flowers. Example: *Ranunculus macranthus*

GARDEN TOURS 2011

I love taking people on garden tours and sharing with them some of my favourite gardens to visit and learn from. This year I have the great good fortune to be adding some new gardens to my already wonderful regularly visited gardens. We will be visiting Dorina Palmer's amazing Point Grey Road garden, Margot Ketchum's fascinating and beautiful West Vancouver garden, Margaret Charlton & Charlie Sale's plant lovers dream garden in Deep Cove and David & Wendy Sellar's beautiful rock & alpine garden in South Surrey. In addition I am very fortunate to have booked a date to see the stunning Elizabeth Miller Garden in Seattle. It's been a couple of years since we were last there and I'm very excited to be returning there this year.

The Margaret Charlton & Charlie Sale Garden

Margaret and Charlie's garden is located at "Woodlands" in the rainforest at the foot of Mt. Seymour on Indian Arm off Burrard Inlet. It is a steep woodland garden backing on to a large forested area that extends to the top of the mountain. The narrow road passes through four miles of stately trees. Annual rainfall is 8' to 10'.

The garden merges successfully with its magnificent surroundings. Planted broad-leaved evergreens blend with wild Salal and Mahonia which extend out from the forest. There are many under-story trees. Streams being an integral part of the local landscape, small to tiny ponds and streams are used to preserve the integrity of the woodland setting. Rocks and cliffs have been exposed for dramatic effect. A complex series of switchback paths lead one easily through two acres of peaceful solitude only 35 minutes from downtown Vancouver.

Clearing and planting began over forty years ago. Rhododendrons, mainly species, were used as the unifying element. Dwarf forms were planted on some of the steeper terraces and bigger shrub forms and tree rhododendrons used elsewhere. Many other trees are throughout the garden, particularly Magnolia and Sorbus in variety. On the sunny and dry upper terraces Mediterranean plants predominate. Perennial plantings and a large rock garden are also very important constituents.

For years Margaret has derived much pleasure from stretching the limits of what could reasonably be expected to flourish in her garden, raising from seed and cuttings a very great number of unusual and interesting plants. This garden has a seemingly endless number of treasures for both the serious and casual gardener, be it rare plants, topography, or landscape. Margaret & Charlie hope you will enjoy it.

Date: Thursday, April 28th, 2011

Time: 6pm

Location: will be announced just prior to the tour. It's a bit of a challenge to find so if you would like to carpool from The Natural Gardener let me know.

Cost: \$15.00

The tour should last approximately 1 1/2 hours. After the tour complimentary wine and appetizers will be provided for you to enjoy.

FREE SPIRIT NURSERY

Free Spirit Nursery is owned and operated by Lambert & Marjanne Vrijmoed. Lambert & Marjanne are dedicated plants people with a philosophy of gardening that is best described in their own words; **“At the nursery we show and share dynamic planting schemes in which not only colour and flowering time play a role but more so the character, texture and flower shapes in order to create a garden that continuously changes under the influence of light, wind, precipitation and time, demanding different levels of appreciation from the viewer”.**

It has been open to the public for the past twelve years and has a unique way of displaying its plants for sale. On one side of the pathway are mature specimens planted in combination and on the other side of the pathway are the same plants in pots. That way you can see how the plant you are interested in will look in your garden. For more information about the nursery visit their website at www.freespiritnursery.ca.

Lambert will be taking us on a special, guided tour of their private gardens that should last about an hour and then we can wander the actual nursery and gardens. After that we will take a half hour lunch break at a lovely sitting area in the nursery so please pack a lunch to bring with you.

Date: Wednesday, May 4, 2011

Time: 9:45am

Cost: \$15.00

Location: Free Spirit Nursery, 20405 32nd Avenue, Langley, BC 604-533-7373

We will meet at The Natural Gardener at 9:45am, carpool out to Free Spirit and arrive at the nursery for 11:00am. Bring a lunch as there are lovely spots in the nursery to have your lunch in. We should be back at The Natural Gardener by 2:00pm

The Glen Patterson Roof Top Garden

Glen has one of the most beautiful roof top gardens I have ever seen and we are very privileged to have the opportunity to view it. Glen had an extensive garden at his home in West Vancouver filled with many unusual and rare trees and shrubs and when he moved to his condo on Coal Harbour he brought some of them with him. He used them as the focal features for his garden and by using Tufa rock for the bones of the garden he has created a plant lovers dream garden. There are hundreds of cultivars and species plants throughout his 800 square foot garden and everywhere you look are more plant treasures to admire. This tour will sell out fast so don't hesitate to book.

Date: Thursday, May 12th, 2011

Time: 6pm

Location: will be announce just prior to the tour

Cost: \$15.00

The tour should last approximately 1 1/2 hour. After the tour complimentary wine and appetizers will be provided for you to enjoy.

The David & Wendy Sellars Garden

Wendy and David Sellars started their garden 24 years ago on an undeveloped one acre lot. Working with a clean slate, they shaped the sloping site to create topographic interest and developed a waterfall, stream and ponds. Species rhododendrons, unusual rhodo hybrids and specimen trees such as *Davidia involucreata* and *Magnolia denudata* form the garden plant structure. A rock garden on a high bank built with local glacial boulders and featuring cliffs formed with large tufa blocks extends along the front garden. Plants likely to be in flower include

Edraianthus serpyllifolius, *Lewisia tweedyi*, *Helichrysum sessiloides*, *Aquilegia bertolonii*, *Androsace studiosorum*, *Androsace villosa*, *Meconopsis betonicifolia*, *Penstemon rupicola* and many Silver Saxifrages.

If you would be interested in a tufa garden planting demonstration please let me know. David is kindly willing to share his expertise with us if we have enough people.

Date: Sunday, May 15, 2011

Time: 1:00 pm

Location: will be announced just prior to the tour

Cost: \$15.00

The tour should last approximately 1 1/2 hours. After the tour complimentary wine and appetizers will be provided for you to enjoy.

The Susan Koelink Garden

Susan Koelink is once again generously sharing her wonderful garden with us. The hardscaping was designed by Ron Rule but the plantings are all Susan. There are choice plants everywhere you look and wonderful surprises around every corner. This is the first time we are touring Susan's garden in mid spring with all the lovely spring flowering plants out in full beauty. Susan's garden has been featured in several garden magazines and was included on the Ballet BC Home & Garden Tour in 2006. Not to be missed.

Date: Thursday, May 19, 2011

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: will be announced just prior to the tour

Cost: \$15.00

The tour should last approximately 1 1/2 hours. After the tour complimentary wine and appetizers will be provided for you to enjoy.

The Dorina Palmer Garden

Dorina Palmers Point Grey Road garden started life way back in 1960 when Dorina and her husband bought the home. There wasn't much in the garden then except a few shrubs and trees including a Japanese Maple and a Lilac Tree that are still there. Over the years Dorina added slowly to the garden while her kids were growing up. Once they were gone she joined a garden club and then the garden started to take off. Now it is an established garden with wonderful plant surprises everywhere. Dorina's garden was featured in the September 2009 issue of Gardens West magazine and will be featured in GardenWise magazine this spring. A garden not to be missed.

Date: Thursday, May 26th, 2011

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: will be announced just prior to the tour

Cost: \$15.00

The tour should last approximately 1 1/2 hours. After the tour complimentary wine and appetizers will be provided for you to enjoy.

The Katharine Nicol Garden

The Katharine Nicol Garden's hardscaping was also designed by Ron Rule but the plantings are all Katharine. In addition to her wonderful selection of perennials, trees and shrubs Katharine has also created a kitchen garden that supplies her family with vegetables all summer long.

Date: Thursday, June 2, 2011

Time: 6:00pm

Location: will be announced just prior to the tour

Cost: \$15.00

The tour should last approximately 1 1/2 hours. After the tour complimentary wine and appetizers will be provided for you to enjoy.

Abkhazi Garden and Lily Maxwell Garden

We will be visiting two of Victoria's most beautiful gardens this year. The Abkhazi Garden is located a short distance from Government House in Victoria and the Lily Maxwell garden is a private garden located down from the Abkhazi Garden close to the water. Here is a description of the two gardens:

Abkhazi Garden

The Abkhazi Garden is an exquisite heritage home and garden. Prince and Princess Abkhazi began creating their garden in 1946. This was the year they married and settled in Victoria, after living separate lives touched by both privilege and tragedy. They immediately began to develop their one-acre property, and continued to maintain and improve the garden throughout their lives together.

The garden is very discreet from the street, with only hints of what exists beyond the hornbeam hedge. What the visitor does find is a garden that embraces a natural landscape that is unique to Victoria. The garden is blessed with dramatic glaciated rocky slopes, magnificent native Garry oaks and gorgeous vistas. The garden is designed to make the most of these remarkable features and it is the Abkhazis' response to their landscape that qualifies it as a stunning example of West Coast design. The garden flows around the rock, taking advantage of deeper pockets of soil for conifers, Japanese maples and rhododendrons that over the last 50 years have grown to an impressive maturity. Carpets of naturalized bulbs, choice alpiners and woodland companions provide interest throughout the year to the discerning plantsman, but it is the overall design that leaves the greatest impression.

The Abkhazis worked together on their creation for over 40 years, referring to it as "their child". After their deaths the Garden changed hands, and in February 2000, The Land Conservancy purchased the property to save it from becoming a townhouse development.

I have had the privilege of visiting this garden several times and it is a real joy to explore. They have rhododendrons that are nearly 100 years old and are more tree-like than shrubby. It was a unique experience to wander among them. This is definitely a must see garden. Please visit their website <http://www.conservancy.bc.ca/content.asp?sectionack=abkhazi> for more detailed information about the garden.

Lily Maxwell Garden

Lily Maxwell is a Garden Designer with a beautiful home and garden located in the Oak Bay area of Victoria. Lily's property slowly slopes down to the road in front of her house and commands a lovely view of the water. But it is the plants that draw your attention. In the front yard she has created sweeping garden beds anchored with shrubs and trees and filled with interesting, rare and unusual perennials. The east side of the house has a sweet little garden area that links the front yard to the back. In the back yard, gravel paths meander through the garden beds Lily has created. Here again a variety of trees and shrubs provide structure in the garden with perennials providing colour and interest. Lily's garden is toured by many garden groups throughout the year and you are really going to enjoy seeing what she has created.

Date: Sunday, June 5, 2011

Time: We will meet at The Natural Gardener at 7:30am to catch the 9:00am ferry to Swartz Bay arriving at The Abkhazi Gardens at 11:00am. We will leave the Abkhazi Gardens at 12:30pm and tour the Lily Maxwell Garden. If we have time we will stop at Government House to wander through the extensive gardens that have been developed there. We will catch the 5pm ferry and should be back at The Natural Gardener by 7:30pm

Cost: \$95.00 includes ferry, gas and tours of both gardens.

The Margot Ketchum Garden

A couple of years ago I had the opportunity and great pleasure of visiting Margot's Garden and was blown away by the lushness and richness of her plants. Everywhere I looked there were plant treasures, both big and small. The property, which Margot purchased in the mid 90's was a mess when she first bought it but by sheer hard work and imagination she has transformed it into a garden of Eden. There is a pond in the front yard with a small bridge over it and the backyard is a shade gardeners paradise. Margot's garden has been featured in GardenWise magazine and she gets numerous requests each year to tour her garden. This is another garden you are not going to want to miss.

Date: Thursday, June 16th, 2011

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: will be announced just prior to the tour

Cost: \$15.00

The tour should last approximately 1 1/2 hours. After the tour complimentary wine and appetizers will be provided for you to enjoy.

The Lisa O'Donnell Garden

The Lisa O'Donnell Garden is a plant collectors dream. Lisa has created an amazing collection of plants, trees and shrubs and one of the most extensive collections of dwarf & miniature conifers I've ever seen. Lisa's garden has been featured in several garden magazines during the past few years. Come and be inspired.

Date: Thursday, June 23rd, 2011

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: will be announced just prior to the tour

Cost: \$15.00

The tour should last approximately 1 1/2 hours. After the tour complimentary wine and appetizers will be provided for you to enjoy.

THE ELIZABETH MILLAR GARDEN

The Miller Botanical Garden is located just north of Seattle. It was the private home and garden of Elizabeth and Pendleton Miller. The garden is known for its exceptional collection of fine trees and shrubs in addition to an expansive collection of woodland herbaceous perennials. The Millers purchased the five-acre piece of land north of the Seattle city limits on a bluff above Puget Sound in 1948. The site commands spectacular views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Peninsula, and offers unique microclimates for growing plants. There are over 4,000 taxa, or different kinds of plants, in the three acres of this uniquely landscaped garden.

The Miller Botanical Garden is still a private garden and is available for tours only on Wednesdays & Thursdays from March until November with a maximum of 500 people each year so I was thrilled to be able to actually book a date and share with you this fascinating and very special garden. For more information on the Miller Botanical Garden please visit their website at www.millergarden.org.

Date: Wednesday, June 29, 2011

Depart Vancouver from The Natural Gardener at 8:30 am

Arrive at The Miller Botanical Garden at 12:45 pm

Tour starts at 1:00pm

Tour ends at 3:00pm

Depart for Vancouver at 3:15 pm

Arrive in Vancouver at 7:15 pm

Cost: \$40.00 includes car, gas & tour

THE CLAUDE LEDOUX & ADRIAN MICHELSEN GARDEN

Claude is the Parks Horticultural Manager for the city of New Westminster so you can just imagine what his garden is like. Both the front garden and the back garden are beautifully laid out and full of some of the most interesting plants you'll ever see. The hardscaping Claude and Adrian have done is also quite something. This is definitely a garden worth travelling to New Westminster for.

Date: Saturday, July 9, 2011

Time: 1:00pm

Location: will be announced just prior to the tour.

Cost: \$15.00

I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden. ~Ruth Stout

THE NATURAL GARDENER GARDEN CLASSES SCHEDULE

SPRING 2011

Now in its 9th season, The Natural Gardener will be holding our popular Spring Garden Classes to help you in your quest for garden knowledge. If you're like me you just can't get enough information about plants and gardening. There always seems to be something new to learn about or a new plant to discover.

We will be offering classes on everything from Organic Vegetable Growing to Summer Container Gardening. Take a look at the following class schedule and decide which one(s) you'd like to take.

This year we are doing something a little different. We will be holding all classes on SATURDAYS in the morning. This way all you folks who couldn't make the evening classes will have the opportunity to join us on Saturdays. All classes are held at The Natural Gardener Garden Store, 4376 West 10th Avenue, begin at 11am, fill up fast and are limited to 15 people. So don't hesitate, book your class(es) today.

You must pre-register for a class either in person, by phone or by e-mail. When phoning or e-mailing, a credit card number is required.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call the store at 604-224-2207 or e-mail us at info@thenatural-gardener.com.

I look forward to seeing you at one of our great classes.

Bob

used in containers, the special requirements for keeping them healthy and full of colour and he will talk about shade and sun containers. Bring a 12" – 14" container and you will make your own planter filled with annuals, perennials and grasses. You'll be the envy of the neighbourhood. Don't forget your gloves & secateurs. This is the most popular class we offer so book early.

Cost: \$50.00 **Class starts at 11 am**

May 21

Vegetable Container Gardening

Instructor: **Emi Do**, Staff Person at The Natural Gardener

Vegetables don't only have to be grown in the ground. If you live in an apartment, condo or townhouse space is limited but you would be amazed at what you can grow in a container. As long as you have a sunny spot you can grow vegetables. Emi will talk about how easy it is to do and what some of the special requirements are for growing vegetables in a pot. Then you will plant up your very own vegetable container to take home. Bring a 12" – 14" container and we will supply the soil and vegetables. Don't forget your gloves.

Cost: \$45.00 **Class starts at 11 am**

May 28

Contemporary Container Annuals

Instructor: **Bob Tuckey**, owner of The Natural Gardener

- The choice of annuals is growing as quickly as the choice of containers to plant them in. Learn to create vibrant containers filled with contrasting texture for that WOW effect. Bring along a 12"-14" container and you'll plant it up. A fun filled morning with great ideas. Don't forget your gloves & secateurs.

Cost: \$45.00 **Class starts at 11 am**



A spring container planting.

The Orchard Mason Bee

The Orchard Mason bee is the common name of a nonsocial native bee (*Osmia lignaria*) that pollinates fruit trees, flowers, and vegetables. It is found throughout most of North America, particularly in wooded areas, but often around homes in towns and cities. With the declining feral or wild bee population, the Orchard Mason bee can be easily attracted to pollinate crop plants. It is especially good at pollinating fruit trees such as apple, pear and cherry and fruit bushes like blueberry.

It is a gentle, shiny blue-black metallic bee, and slightly smaller than a honeybee. They are non-aggressive and won't sting unless they are squeezed in your hand. Males are smaller than females and have longer antennae and an additional tuft of light colored hairs on the face. Females have hairs on the underside of the abdomen adapted for carrying pollen. This bee does not live in a hive. In nature, it nests within hollow stems, woodpecker drillings, and insect holes found in trees or wood. Sometimes, there may be dense collections of individual nest holes, but these bees neither connect or share nests, nor help provision or protect each others' young.

They make excellent pollinating insects, but do not produce honey. A number of species of Orchard Mason Bees are native to North America. They occur in different climatic environments but are particularly well adapted in the northern ranges of blooming fruit trees. The common Blue Orchard Mason Bee, *Osmia lignaria*, is found in the B.C.'s southern Interior and coastal areas. It goes under various names including Blue Orchard Bee, Orchard Mason Bee, Orchard Bee, and *Osmia* Bee.

The Orchard Mason Bee belongs to the family Megachilidae which is comprised of a large number of solitary pollinators. The species is gregarious in that they nest close together. This behavior offers several advantages such as lower predation pressures, increased mating opportunity, and optimized genetic variability through cross breeding. It is this gregarious behavior that has offered the opportunity to "domesticate" the Orchard Mason Bee. Also, because of this behavior it is possible to create Orchard Mason Bee 'Houses' that you can hang on an exterior wall of your home, garage or shed. The Natural Gardener carries two types of locally designed and made Mason Bee Lodges.



Mason Bee



Mason Bee Lodge

You can tell spring is on the way because this newsletter was a long one this month. I hope you enjoyed it and I hope you enjoy getting back out into your garden. Don't forget to sign up for a garden tour or two and/or a class or two. They are fun, informative and I know you will enjoy them.

Happy Gardening!

Bob



Spring is coming!